

Message Text

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10
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 101625Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2187
INFO AMCONSUL ZAGREB

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR YO PINT
SUBJ: DEATH OF AN OLD COMRADE

1. THEY BURIED VELJKO VLAHOVIC SUNDAY AFTER AN EXTRAORDINARY
OUTPORUING OF GRIEF AND ADULATION.

2. ONE OF TITO'S OLDES COMRADES, VLAHOVIC REMAINED CLOSE
TO THE CENTERS OF POWER AFTER THE WAR, BUT NEVER STEPPED
INTO THE REALLY TOP POSITIONS. THIS PERHAPS EXPLAINS HIS
VERY REAL POPULARITY. AS ONE YUGOSLAV PUT IT, VLAHOVIC
WAS TOO DECENT A PERSON TO DO THE THINGS ONE HAD TO DO TO
WIELD GREAT POWER IN THIS SOCIETY -- AT LEAST IN THE EARLY DAYS.
BUT HE REMAINED CLOSE IN, AND WAS ONE OF THE PHILOSPHER PRINCES
OF THE SYSTEM. THUS HE WAS MADE A MEMBER OF THE NEW LCY PRESIDUM
LAST SPRING, ALTHOUGH WELL-KNOWN TO BE IN PRECARIOUS HEALTH.
AND WHEN HE WAS HOSPITALIZED LAST YEAR TITO WENT TO SEE HI,
A NEARLY UNPRECEDENTED GESTURE (THE ONLY OTHER CASE WE CAN REMEMBER
IS A RECENT VISIT TO KARDELJ WHEN HE WAS HOSPITALIZED).

3. SO THEY PULLED OUT THE STOPS AND HAD THE FULL EQUIVALENT
OF A STATE FUNERAL, BUT AS THE CEREMONIES WENT FORWARD THE
STREETS WERE LINED NOT BY THE TRADITIONAL EASTERN EUROPEAN
RENT-A-CROWDS, BUT BY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF
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LIFE, ALL VOLUNTEERS AND MANY SHEDDING REAL TEARS.

4. AN EVENT SURPRISING TO MANY WAS THE SIGHT OF STANE DOLANC, AS SECRETARY OF THE PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE EVERYONE'S ACKNOWLEDGED TOUGH GUY, NEARLY DISSOLVING INTO TEARS AS HE GAVE HIS TELEVISED EULOGY THE EVENING VLAHOVI'S DEATH WAS ANNOUNCED. A DRY-EYED DOLANC SUBSEQUENTLY PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE AS VLAHOVIC'S PRINCIPAL EULOGIZER DURING THE CEREMONIAL SESSION OF THE LCY PRESIDUM WHERE TITO PRESIDED.

5. AND TITO HIMSELF WAS MUCH MORE PROMINENT THAN IS HIS WONT AT SUCH OCCASIONS (HE TRADITIONALLY DUCKS FUNERALS AND HAS OTHERWISE OCCUPIED HIMSELF DURING THE RITES FOR SUCH AS NEHRU AND NASSER WHILE HIS CONTEMPORARIES WENT). HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, GO TO THE CEMETERY FOR THE FINAL SERVICE.

6. THESE EVENTS CANNOT BUT HAVE GIVEN MANY IN THIS SOCIETY PAUSE FOR THOUGHT: RATHER THAN DEJA VUE, IT IS A PEEK UNDER THE CURTAIN.
TOON

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